



WISEWOMAN

Success Story 7 Massachusetts Partners Offer a Continuum of Treatment Interventions for Tobacco Users

Location Massachusetts

Focus Help women quit smoking by offering them tobacco cessation counseling options and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) free of charge.

Strategy The WISEWOMAN staff at the Department of Public Health partnered with the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program and the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Medical School to find ways of making counseling and NRT available.

Early Successes By coordinating with the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program and the UMass Medical School, the WISEWOMAN program had access to valuable staff training. WISEWOMAN risk reduction educators are now conducting the 5 A's and referring women when applicable to either the QuitWorks program for phone counseling or to a certified tobacco treatment specialist for individual counseling with NRT or group counseling with NRT.

This partnership also has enabled the WISEWOMAN program to play a significant role in statewide efforts to help women quit smoking. WISEWOMAN is now one of several public health programs engaged in the statewide Partnership for a Heart Healthy and Stroke Free Massachusetts, which strives to ensure that the QuitWorks program is offered statewide.

Both counseling services and the nicotine replacement therapy have been available for a short time only. The WISEWOMAN program plans to evaluate the impact of these services after collecting a complete year of data.

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Massachusetts Partners Offer a Continuum of Treatment Interventions for Tobacco Users

In July 2004, the Massachusetts WISEWOMAN Program began offering tobacco cessation counseling options and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) free of charge to its participants. Three years ago, WISEWOMAN routinely referred its tobacco users to 85 local tobacco treatment programs funded by the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program (MTCP). These programs offered group and individual counseling and NRT for free or at a reduced cost to all state residents.

As the MTCP budget decreased, these programs had a difficult time staying open. In 2003, the MTCP budget was reduced by 90%, and funding was eliminated for all local face-to-face tobacco treatment programs. Only a few of these programs still operate today, and most charge fees that are not affordable for many WISEWOMAN participants. However, the MTCP has managed to maintain its Try to Stop Resource Center, which houses a quit line, an interactive web site for smokers, and the QuitWorks program. The QuitWorks program links both health care providers and their patients who smoke to a toll-free quit line that provides telephone counseling free of charge.

Despite these resources, the smoking rate in 2000 among low-income women aged 40 to 64 exceeded 40%. WISEWOMAN staff predicted that smoking rates for WISEWOMAN clients would be similar. In 2003, the WISEWOMAN staff at the Department of Public Health, the MTCP staff, and the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Medical School embarked on a new partnership to develop a plan for finding resources to fund tobacco treatment services for WISEWOMAN participants. This new plan included strategies for providing WISEWOMAN participants with smoking cessation counseling and free nicotine replacement therapy.

The UMass Medical School developed a full-day training session for all WISEWOMAN risk reduction educators and case managers. Attendees learned how to use the 5 A's (Ask, Assess, Advise, Assist, and Arrange). The session also covered the QuitWorks program and the basics of pharmacotherapy. WISEWOMAN risk reduction educators now use the 5 A's to refer WISEWOMAN clients to appropriate smoking cessation interventions. If a WISEWOMAN client says she smokes and wants to quit, the risk reduction educator will refer her to an individual or group counseling session provided by tobacco treatment specialists. All tobacco treatment specialists are certified through a rigorous UMass training program. After face-to-face counseling, clients can receive free NRT (1 week's supply at a time). They must revisit the specialist to receive an additional supply. WISEWOMAN participants thus receive the most effective help available to quit smoking: a combination of behavioral counseling and NRT.

If a WISEWOMAN client uses tobacco but is not ready to quit, is unable to attend face-to-face counseling sessions, or prefers telephone counseling, she is referred to the QuitWorks program. The QuitWorks counselor will call her, provide telephone counseling, and help her determine the next steps toward quitting. A report on her progress is sent to her referring provider and to the WISEWOMAN risk reduction educator. The educator is then able to reinforce progress she has made toward quitting.

The UMass Medical School facilitated the purchase of NRT (patch, gum, and lozenge). The lozenge was a new option for women unable to use gum due to dental work or dentures. WISEWOMAN provided scholarships for health professionals seeking tobacco treatment specialist training and certification. "WISEWOMAN covered the cost of certification for two bilingual tobacco treatment specialists," WISEWOMAN Director Mary Lou Woodford says. "These two specialists are able to provide tobacco treatment services where no services were previously available."



Importance of Success

WISEWOMAN coordinators at all seven clinics are thrilled by the new program, because it offers women immediate access to smoking cessation counseling and NRT. Moreover, because of this partnership with the MTCP and the UMass Medical School, WISEWOMAN is now one of several public health programs that engage in work with the Partnership for a Heart Healthy and Stroke Free Massachusetts. This coalition of private and public partners strives to ensure that the QuitWorks program is offered statewide. Through this partnership, the Women's Health Network is now able to offer QuitWorks phone counseling services to all Breast and Cervical Cancer Program participants as well.

Lessons Learned

- Partnerships offer win-win situations that make it possible for programs to expand their resources. They can also open the door to many opportunities. All programs should investigate the opportunities to work with private and public agencies and organizations.
- Many states are developing statewide cardiovascular health plans. Learn about your state's plan and look for ways you can partner with these initiatives to help WISEWOMAN participants.
- When training clinicians to incorporate the 5 A's into their services, partner with a college or university in your state that has proven its ability to train clinicians to use the counseling method.